

## Andrew Jackson to D. G. Goodlett, March 12, 1844, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>TO D. G. GOODLETT. 1

1 Of Nashville.

Hermitage, March 12, 1844.

My dear sir, Your letter of the 7th instant is received and now before me. I have read it with care, have no doubt it was written with good intentions—"blessed is the peace maker saith the Lord". Thus premised, I have to remark that I am fearful that from some cause your eyes are blinded to the imperfection of the characters of both Mr. Clay and Mr. Adams. The following facts will well considered will aid you in judging of them correctly. I remark, I never have been either of their assailants. Their falshoods and calumnies, have been levelled often against me, to destroy my character, but have fallen harmless at my feet. I have freely forgave them, but I cannot forget the vile slanders they have endeavoured to propagate against me, to injure me.

You request me, (as appropriate) to express my conviction of the misrepresentations that has been made to me with regard to the alledged impropriety between Mr. Adams and Mr. clay, meaning the bargain and intrige, which made Mr. J. Q. Adams President, and Mr. Clay sec. of State, and refer to Mr. Buchannan etc. etc. Mr. Buchannan, never gave any exonerating testimony in there favour, he denied having any personal knowledge of the facts alledged against them, he has ever viewed both as corrupt men and not to be trusted. Let us take a dispationate view of the facts as recorded in the history of the times. There was a deadly enmity existing at that time between Mr. J. Q. Adams and Clay, and

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a postponed case of viracity existing between them, Clay and all the Kentucky delegation instructed by the legislature and requested, to vote against Mr. Adams. It was predicted before the election that Clay would make Adams President, and Adams would make Clay secretary of state. This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

Look into the investigation before the Legislature of Kentucky and the excuse given by the members of congress, "That they understood that if Mr. Adams was President that he would make Clay secretary of state but if Jackson was made President Clay would not be made secretary of state. A member of congress approached me on that subject, "To fight the Ad[ams faction with their own] weapons," I [was not able to restrain 0298 274 my] 1 indignation and reply that such a corrupt proposition meritted, and such a rebuke that will not be forgotten. Hence the inference, as I suppose, by the Kentucky members, that if Adams was President Clay would be secretary of state, if I was Clay would not be. What was the result. Clay voted for Adams and made him President and Adams made Clay secretary of state. Is this not proof as strong as holy writ of the understanding and corrupt coalition between them, And in the open face of these stubborn facts and circumstances you wish me to give my declaration of their innocence of this combined corruption of intrigue and management. There is not a moral mind, free from party influence that do not believe that this combination made Adams president, and Clay secretary of state, and yr. calmn judgtment and reflection, free from any undue influence, will pronounce them guilty.

1 The letter is mutilated at this point and the restorations are as suggested by the context.

You refer to Beverly, who made the charge with many others against this corruption, but in 1840, came out against it. do you know the character of Beverly, if you do, I regret that you place any dependence in him. He is I believe a Bankrupt, both in fortune and character. But you are pleased to say, "that if all other evidence were wanting of the integrity of Mr. Clay the often repeated assertion of that great and good man John Q. Adams would be conclusive with you and you think with me. Not so with me. I know that there is neither truth nor honor in him. Have you forgot the public rebuke I was obliged to give him, for

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the positive falshood he stated against me to connect me with [a plan,] combining with Genl. Houston for the conquest of Texas [that] I had promised the Government of Texas to H. Burton—a baser falshood never was coined—have you forgotten his receiving a confidential letter purloined from me by that scamp Doctor Mayo, and altho marked confidential [he read it] in the House of Representative to fasten upon me the falshood that I had never sent the original to Governor Fulton of Arkansa, to enquire into the preparations making by Genl. Houston to conquer Texas, and to Mr. Adams disgrace and shewing his utter destruction of truth. Fulton then secretary of Arkansa, but acting Governor brought on the original, swore to its receipt, long before the copy marked confidential, was purloined, or in the hand of Adams. Now I ask you if any honest man getting a confidential letter in his possession, would not have at once returned it, instead of attempting to use it clandestinely to injure me. These are two instances of Mr. Adams baseness and want of truth and Justice, and as to his assertions no one who really knows him has any confidence in him, only those who use him for the vilest purposes. Mr. Adams is vindictive, reckless of truth when he wishes to defame and no confidence can be placed in him.

Other cases I could state but I am too feeble to proceed, as I have to bring to your recollection Mr. Clays justice and veracity. You cannot have forgotten the great Idoletrous hard cider and coon gathering at Nashville in 1840. Mr. Clay was the leading travelling, electioneering 0299 275 demagogue there. remember I was sick at home. in his speech he charged me with appointing public defaulters to office and designated Edward Livingston. A generous Whigg hearing the charge and knowing it was false called and reported the speech to me. I, sick as I was, got into my carriage knowing the man as I did, that Clay expected I would not hear of this slander of the living and the dead, would leave it as political capital for my traducers in Nashville. You must remember I addressed him thro the papers, and proved him by the record of the Senate a wilfull and corrupt liar, and that all his endeavours, in the secrete sessions of the senate, by an overwhelming Whigg Federal majority, Mr. Edward Livingston nomination was confirmed by una[ni]mous vote

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Mr. Clay being present. This is only one case of many. This under your own eye. I ask you then my dear Sir can any man of moral virtue that knows Mr. Clay have any confidence in his veracity. All who know Mr. Clay knows that individually he is void of good morals, and that he is politically a reckless demagogue, ambitious and regardless of truth when it comes in the way of his ambition.

Now my dear Doctor let us look to the protection of the religion and morals of our country, and the perpetuation of our happy republican system, which is based upon the virtue of the people, and support none for office, but good moral characters, who will use their influence to put down vice and immorality and sustain true religion and virtue, not men known to be profligate in private life and in public ambitious demagogues roaming over the Country slandering both the dead and the living, deceiving the people by falshoods knowing them to be such, to add to their own agrandisment and thereby reach the Presidential chair. I ask what has John Q. Adams or Henry Clay ever done for their countries good—nothing, but much mischief. They both have apostatised from their early principles, both regardless of truth, when it suits their purpose to defame. I have passed over many acts of these men to calumniate me because my debility is such that I can scarce wield my pen, all of record, and such is my opinion of them both, that I do not think there are any two men exalted as they have been, by the people equally profligate, and fit companions for Poindexter and the noted Prentice. I have never assailed these men, I have acted upon the defensive, I have forgiven them but I cannot forget their profligacy. I write what I do know, and have proof on the recorded history of the times and have stated a few of the facts that yr. eyes may be opened. yr. friend